



# Strengthen Sendea: An innovative cooperative of local solar SME for energy access

## Summary

Country	Uganda
Implementer	Stiftung Solarenergie
Co-implementer	Association of Sendea UG Ltd.
Target groups	SMEs in the solar energy sector
Duration	10/2020 – 06/2022
Type of energy use	Electrification

## Challenge

Many Ugandans only have limited access to electricity, and where they do, they can rarely rely on it. To compensate for power outages, many households, micro-entrepreneurs and businesses rely on self-produced solar power. However, the Ugandan market for solar technology solutions is often in the hands of international companies because local small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) lack access to quality products, credit, advice and marketing and face stiff competition. To overcome these challenges, five Ugandan solar companies have founded the “Solar Entrepreneurs Network for Decentralised Energy Access Uganda” (Sendea UG).

## Impact Logic

In order to better position the Ugandan solar industry on the domestic market in competition with international companies, Sendea UG is pursuing four priorities: Promoting the exchange of experience between the management of the member solar companies, establishing a Sendea Academy that offers training courses in the areas of technology, sales, financing and management, arranging loans to its members and acquiring orders from international aid organisations that need support for their solar projects. These activities ensure that Sendea can grow and attract new

members and train more technicians. This in turn leads to an overall increase in the availability and usage of solar power-systems throughout Uganda, which strengthens the Ugandan national energy grid.

## Innovative Project Element

What makes Sendea unique is the fact that local companies take the initiative and join forces to work together in the energy access sector. Therefore Sendea Uganda is a grassroots cooperative and initiative. The fundamental idea: Growth through cooperation. The target is to ensure a better business by cooperation, for instance: Offering services to all members (e. g. training); sharing resources (tools, staff); and acting as a purchasing syndicate. As an economic cooperative Sendea is complementary to associations like the National Solar Association or the Renewable Energy Association. Members of these organisations are not limited to local companies. Therefore bigger (international) companies take a more prominent role and usually are in command. Additionally, these associations, which are more politically oriented, influence policies. These associations are not allowed to do business (e. g. become a purchasing syndicate). In contrast to this, Sendea is an economic cooperative which promotes growth through offers for its members. The activities of Sendea are therefore complementary to those of national associations and support their work.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

[www.gruene-buergerenergie.org](http://www.gruene-buergerenergie.org)

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